

PUBLIC BUILDINGS—PHILADELPHIA.

REPORT

OF THE

POSTMASTER GENERAL, ATTORNEY GENERAL, AND  
SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,

AS TO

*The condition of the public buildings in the city of Philadelphia.*

JANUARY 6, 1859.—Referred to the Committee of Ways and Means, and ordered to be printed.

*To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:*

In pursuance of the joint resolution passed by Congress at its last session, the undersigned have carefully examined and considered the situation of the government buildings at Philadelphia, and endeavored to ascertain what will be the best arrangement for a court-house, custom-house, and post office. The conviction to which we have been brought is briefly the following:

1. The post office ought to be in Chesnut street, and would be wholly out of place at the old Bank of Pennsylvania.

2. The custom-house might be so altered as to fit it tolerably well for a post office, by making certain additions, which would not injure the appearance of the building on its Chestnut street front; but because such alteration would destroy the beauty of the Library street front, it is wholly inadmissible. We therefore reject the proposed plan of putting the post office there.

3. The old Bank of Pennsylvania, on Second and Dock streets, is not suitable for either a post office or custom-house. It ought to be sold for what it will bring.

4. The tobacco warehouse, on Dock street, is very well adapted for the purposes of a custom-house; and it ought to be bought for that purpose if it can be obtained, as we are assured it can be, at a reasonable price.

5. The lot immediately west of the custom-house, and on the same side of Chestnut street, should be bought for the post office. It is offered at \$75,000.

6. The courts should be established in the present custom-house.

7. The lot purchased from the American Philosophical Society for the court-house should be sold.

8. This arrangement will, in our opinion, not only be the best, but the most economical, as the following estimates will show.

To carry out the present law it will require:

To make Bank of Pennsylvania fit for a custom-house.....	\$120,000
To make wings, &c., to present custom-house, and other repairs necessary for post office and court-house.....	136,000
	<hr/> 256,000 <hr/>

To meet these expenses, there is an appropriation unexpended of.....	120,000
The Philosophical Hall, purchased for a court-house, may be sold for.....	75,000
	<hr/> 195,000
Leaving to be provided.....	61,000
	<hr/> 256,000 <hr/>

By the plan we propose, the tobacco warehouse can be purchased for.....	110,000
The lot owned by Levy can be had for.....	75,000
A new post office can be built on the last mentioned lot for	120,000
The tobacco warehouse can be repaired and fitted as a custom-house, for.....	20,000
	<hr/> 325,000 <hr/>

For these expenses we have the following means:

The Philosophical Hall can be sold for.....	75,000
The old Pennsylvania Bank for.....	125,000
Unexpended appropriation.....	120,000
	<hr/> 320,000
Leaving to be provided.....	5,000
	<hr/> 325,000 <hr/>

The difference in cost between the two plans is \$56,000. But this is not the only saving. The tobacco warehouse, besides serving as a custom-house, will afford storage for which the government pays now an annual rent of \$9,000, equal to a capital of \$150,000; and the building we propose to use for a custom-house will answer the additional purpose of a prison. It may be necessary to make the site of

the post office perfect by the purchase of Bailey's lot, adjoining Levy's on the west. It can be had for \$85,000. Even then there will be a saving when considered with reference to the value of the storage obtained at the tobacco warehouse.

9. We are so impressed with the superior advantages of the measures we propose, that we do not hesitate to lay the facts before Congress, instead of carrying out the present defective law.

AARON V. BROWN,  
J. S. BLACK,  
HOWELL COBB.

DECEMBER 1, 1858.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS  
JANUARY 1, 1922  
HONORABLE JOHN D. BROWN  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

January 1, 1922